

RETAIL PRICES - DECEMBER QUARTER, 1951.

All Items - "C" Series.

"C" Series index numbers of retail prices of all items (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases, December Quarter, 1951.

City.	Index Number.	Increase from Year Ended June, 1939.	Increase from December Quarter, 1950.	Increase from September Quarter, 1951.
		%	%	%
Brisbane ..	1,934	124.1	25.1	7.7
Toowoomba ..	1,944	128.4	24.5	6.8
Rockhampton ..	1,950	126.5	23.7	7.2
Townsville ..	2,006	120.0	25.8	7.8
Bundaberg ..	1,911	127.2	23.4	6.6
Warwick ..	1,918	133.3	25.1	6.6

The December quarter of 1951 was the third successive quarter in which the rise in the "C" Series index number for Brisbane exceeded all previous quarterly rises. The increase in the recent quarter was 7.7 per cent., compared with 5.8 per cent. in the September quarter, 5.3 per cent. in the June quarter, and 4.3 per cent. in the March quarter, of 1951. Food and grocery prices, which were up by 16.1 per cent., have recently shown an accelerating rate of increase, figures for the last three quarters being 5.0, 9.3, and 16.1 per cent. respectively. On the other hand, the rate of increase of clothing and footwear prices has been getting less, the successive rises for the last three quarters being 9.7, 4.3, and 2.8 per cent. Clothing and footwear prices rose much more sharply during the war than food prices, so that, in spite of the larger recent rises in food and groceries, prices of the former group at the end of 1951 were, in comparison with pre-war levels, still much higher than those of the latter. The food and grocery index by December quarter, 1951, had reached 150.6 per cent. above its 1938-39 level, whereas the corresponding increase for clothing and footwear was 245.5 per cent. Miscellaneous items, which include household drapery, hardware, fuel, power, and fares, after increasing 3.9 per cent. during the recent quarter, were 78.1 per cent. dearer than in 1938-39.

Price increases in the five provincial cities of Queensland for which the index is calculated were fairly similar to those in Brisbane in the December quarter of 1951. Food and grocery prices rose less than in Brisbane in all five cities, but clothing and footwear prices rose a little more except in Toowoomba where the increase was 1.7 per cent. compared with 2.8 per cent. for Brisbane.

The latest increase in the index number brought the total rise in Brisbane prices during the four quarters of 1951 to 25.1 per cent., compared with 11.0 per cent. during 1950. During 1951, food and grocery prices rose by 38.3 per cent., clothing and footwear by 21.6 per cent., and miscellaneous items by 19.5 per cent.

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, December Quarter, 1951.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Sept. Quarter, 1951.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Sept. Quarter, 1951.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From Sept. Quarter, 1951.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	150.6	16.1	245.5	2.8	78.1	3.9
Toowoomba ..	166.5	13.9	240.0	1.7	78.6	5.6
Rockhampton	145.1	13.6	243.0	3.9	82.0	3.7
Townsville ..	138.8	14.3	242.6	3.0	84.4	4.8
Bundaberg ..	137.2	12.2	248.6	3.0	77.4	3.7
Warwick ..	155.9	11.4	246.4	3.9	77.6	4.5

Food and Groceries.

During the recent quarter, increases recorded in the food and groceries index numbers ranged from 11.4 per cent. in Warwick to 16.1 per cent. in Brisbane. The increase in Brisbane, which was the highest quarterly increase ever recorded in Queensland, was considerably more than that registered in the previous quarter (9.3 per cent.). Some of the food items which increased in price during the quarter were butter, bacon, bread, potatoes, milk, and meat. The only decrease was for onions.

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

The rent index remained stationary in Toowoomba and Warwick but increased in the other four cities by amounts ranging from 0.4 per cent. in Rockhampton to 4.3 per cent. in Townsville.

Clothing and Footwear.

The increase of 2.8 per cent. in the clothing and footwear index number for Brisbane during the December quarter was the lowest quarterly increase in this index since September quarter, 1950, and about the same as the average quarterly increase since 1939.

Miscellaneous Items.

The increase of 3.9 per cent. in Brisbane in the miscellaneous items index during the quarter under review, although somewhat less than the increase recorded in the previous quarter, has been exceeded on only four occasions since 1939.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required, in December quarter, 1951, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	19	11	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	19	8	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
Rockhampton ..	1	0	2	1	0	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	18	0	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	9 $\frac{1}{4}$
Townsville ..	1	0	9	1	1	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	19	4	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	1	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Bundaberg ..	19	9	4	19	11	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	15	8	4	1	0	5	1	0	9
Warwick ..	19	10		1	0	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	16	6		19	11	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	0 $\frac{1}{4}$

In relation to Brisbane prices, the cost of all items together increased slightly during the quarter in Townsville but decreased in the other cities covered by the survey. The largest movement recorded since the previous quarter was in Warwick, where the price of goods costing £1 in Brisbane decreased from £1 0s. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in September quarter to 19s. 10d. in December quarter.





Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.		Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Decr., 1951.	Quarter Ended -				
					Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.	June, 1951.	Sept., 1951.	Decr., 1951.
Brisbane ..	..	863	1,079	1,760	1,546	1,612	1,698	1,796	1,934
Toowoomba ..	..	851	1,092	1,773	1,562	1,623	1,705	1,821	1,944
Rockhampton ..	..	861	1,084	1,785	1,577	1,631	1,739	1,819	1,950
Townsville ..	..	912	1,119	1,818	1,595	1,651	1,752	1,861	2,006
Bundaberg ..	..	841	1,059	1,754	1,548	1,607	1,706	1,792	1,911
Weighted Average									
Five Towns ..	..	864	1,082	1,767	1,553	1,616	1,706	1,804	1,940
Warwick ..	..	822	1,073	1,751	1,533	1,591	1,696	1,800	1,918

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.		Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Decr., 1951.	Quarter Ended -				
					Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.	June, 1951.	Sept., 1951.	Decr., 1951.
Brisbane ..	..	856	971	1,823	1,551	1,610	1,690	1,847	2,145
Toowoomba ..	..	814	1,010	1,859	1,574	1,640	1,722	1,904	2,169
Rockhampton ..	..	895	1,012	1,913	1,658	1,725	1,801	1,931	2,194
Townsville ..	..	955	1,057	1,941	1,635	1,700	1,787	1,996	2,281
Bundaberg ..	..	903	1,027	1,881	1,639	1,701	1,773	1,909	2,142
Weighted Average									
Five Towns ..	..	864	984	1,842	1,568	1,629	1,709	1,869	2,159
Warwick ..	..	846	1,000	1,881	1,577	1,642	1,772	1,943	2,165

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.		Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Decr., 1951.	Quarter Ended -				
					Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.	June, 1951.	Sept., 1951.	Decr., 1951.
Brisbane ..	..	829	1,454	2,690	2,355	2,436	2,673	2,787	2,864
Toowoomba ..	..	829	1,429	2,655	2,338	2,404	2,623	2,773	2,819
Rockhampton ..	..	845	1,477	2,696	2,347	2,401	2,696	2,788	2,898
Townsville ..	..	840	1,457	2,703	2,379	2,437	2,704	2,794	2,878
Bundaberg ..	..	839	1,447	2,733	2,376	2,431	2,735	2,839	2,925
Weighted Average									
Five Towns ..	..	831	1,454	2,690	2,356	2,431	2,675	2,738	2,866
Warwick ..	..	825	1,441	2,662	2,312	2,400	2,640	2,751	2,858